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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/471,829	12/23/1999	MASATSUGU HATANAKA	49481(551)	8004
21874	7590	04/23/2007	EXAMINER	
EDWARDS ANGELL PALMER & DODGE LLP			CONNOLLY, PATRICK J	
P.O. BOX 55874			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
BOSTON, MA 02205			2877	
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE		
3 MONTHS	04/23/2007	PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/471,829	HATANAKA ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Patrick J. Connolly	2877	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 January 2007.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1 and 10-20 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 19 and 20 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 23 December 1999 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed January 25, 2007 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

The applicant submits that the claimed invention provides a useful, concrete and tangible result and as such the claims are directed to a practical application of a judicial exception resulting in patent eligible subject matter. The examiner respectfully disagrees that the result of the claimed invention is tangible. The applicant is reminded as set forth in MPEP 2106 that, ‘the focus is not on whether the steps taken to achieve a particular result are useful, tangible, and concrete, but rather on whether the final result achieved by the claimed invention is “useful, tangible and concrete”’. The final result of the claimed invention is the determination of a thin film thickness. As such, the final result is a number. Although the number may be representative of a real world property, the result is simply a number not a practical application of the number. Until this number is claimed as used in a practical application or claimed so that the number is made available in such a manner that its usefulness in a disclosed practical application can be realized, it cannot be said to be tangible. In the instant claims, the result of the calculation is not claimed as being used in a disclosed practical application nor as conveyed in such a manner that a disclosed practical application can be realized. As such, the claims are not directed to a practical application of the calculation, but rather solely to the mathematical operations and are therefore nonstatutory (see MPEP 2106.02).

The applicant is further directed to Annex III: Improper Tests for Subject Matter Eligibility in the Interim Guidelines for Examination of Patent Applications for Patent Subject Matter Eligibility (OG Notice: 22 November 2005).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Merely determining the thickness of the thin film would not appear to be sufficient to constitute a tangible result, since the outcome of the analysis step has not been used in a disclosed practical application nor made available in such a manner that its usefulness in a disclosed practical application can be realized. See OG Notices: 22 November 2005, "Interim Guidelines for Examination of Patent Applications for Patent Subject Matter Eligibility".

See part b. *Practical Application the Produces a Useful, Concrete, and Tangible Result* under Section IV *Determine Whether the Claimed Invention Complies with the Subject Matter Eligibility Requirement of 35 U.S.C. Sec. 101*, sentence 3, in the OG Notice from 22 November 2005 states ‘In determining whether the claim is for a “practical application,” the focus is not on whether the steps taken to achieve a particular result are useful, tangible, and concrete, but rather that the final result achieved by the claimed invention is “useful, tangible, and concrete.”’

Allowable Subject Matter

If the issues with respect to non-statutory subject matter, as outlined above, were to be resolved by means of amendment, then claims 19 and 20 would be allowable.

Claims 1 and 10-18 allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

See Applicant's Remarks, filed March 4, 2006, for reasons for allowance over the prior art of record.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

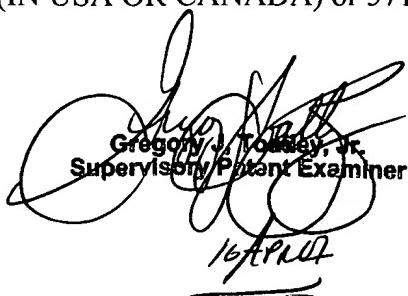
Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Patrick J. Connolly whose telephone number is 571.272.2412. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00 am - 7:00 pm Monday-Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gregory J. Toatley, Jr. can be reached on 571.272.2800 ext. 77. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Patrick Connolly PJC
04.15.2007


Gregory J. Toatley, Jr.
Supervisory Patent Examiner
16A/PAC